

THE BEACON

FOR SCHOOL AND HOME

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AN ANXIOUS NIGHT

by ETHEL MAY WHEELER



she answered briskly. "And father will be home tomorrow, you know."

"I do hope so!" cried Lydia. "Shall I run over to Uncle's to tell them about Fred?"

"No — no; that would only worry them, especially since Uncle Henry is away."

Lydia turned back to her window rather impatiently. If only she could do something instead of sitting there. "Let us put a candle in the window, Lily," she said presently to the youngest sister who had crept to her side. "Then Fred can see from far down the road, even through the woods."

Between them they lighted and placed a large home-made candle on the sill.

"Come, children, we will eat and not wait longer for Fred," said Mrs. Slade at length. "I shall keep the biscuits hot for him."

After supper Lydia with Sadie's help washed the dishes, while Mrs. Slade prepared Lily for bed. "Early to bed and early to rise" was a slogan of these north-country folks.

When the dishes were put in the rough cupboard Lydia told Sadie she would "just step outside to have a look around," and throwing a shawl over her head she ran into the clear zero night. Down the shovelled path she sped, and as she neared the woods a far-away, all too familiar sound greeted her ears.

"Wolves! I was sure of it! O Fred, where are you?" Lydia hallooed in lusty fashion and peered ahead through the trees until both her throat and eyes smarted. "I'd better go back," she said aloud at last. "This is no good!"

As she opened the door of the cabin Mrs. Slade looked quickly up from her mending, and then, seeing only Lydia, raised her finger to her lips.

"Lily must get to sleep; Sadie is with her," said the troubled woman. "Did you hear — or see — anything, Lydia?"

"I heard a wolf — no mistake!" said the girl under her breath.

Without a word Mrs. Slade rose and went to the mantel. Cautiously she took the gun from its rack. It was loaded always although kept secure with a safety device. Mrs. Slade knew how to use the gun. It had proved useful several times.

Lydia watched her mother eagerly. Now something would be done! Anything was better than suspense.

"Get your warmest wraps, child," whispered Mrs. Slade as she herself prepared for out-doors.

"Shall we say anything to Sadie?" asked Lydia when they were ready to start.

Mrs. Slade nodded and going to the inner door beckoned to the girl in the bedroom, who came quietly out and listened gravely to her mother's plans.

"Lily will no doubt sleep. If you hear a shot do not be alarmed, and whatever you do — keep the door bolted. The fire — don't let it get low. We will return as soon as possible. Can you put up the shutters alone, Sadie?"

"Oh, yes, mother," said Sadie. "I've done it before. What is the thermometer now?"

"Just ten below zero," answered Lydia. "Don't be surprised if we aren't back before midnight, Sadie! But Fred will be with us!"

Sadie nodded silently and let them out quietly, locking the heavy door after them.

As Mrs. Slade shouldered the gun she remarked anxiously, "I wonder whether Fred would remain at the mill for the night. If told the wolves were near he surely would."

"But, mother, we must find out. Oh, dear! Why do we have to live 'way off here, with father not home half the time?"

"Hush, child," said Mrs. Slade firmly; "it cannot be helped. Let us save our strength —"

A wild far-off baying reached their ears and made them shiver involuntarily as they walked, or rather plodded, through the deep glistening snow. At length the woods were passed and the winding cor-

ALL this happened many years ago. The Slade family had come to live "back in the Bush," as it was commonly called in that northern country. Winter especially was a troublous time for there were wolves as well as snow to contend with.

Mr. Slade's brother lived on a neighboring "farm" which was simply a few acres of cleared land. The next neighbors were fully three miles away.

Lydia sat near the small window in her father's two-roomed log-cabin and peered anxiously out. There was the new moon rising clear and sharp, with a large star not far from it. The deep snow glistened in the deepening shadows. How cold the night would be!

Lydia wondered why Fred had not made his appearance before this. He had started early enough that morning for the nearest flour mill — just seven miles away! Some distance to travel on foot in the middle of a severe northern winter! Lydia well knew there were dangers a-plenty.

"One comfort," said Mrs. Slade, quietly, from near the fireplace where she was preparing the evening meal, "Fred has a clear, calm night. He will surely come soon now." Lydia noticed the tone of anxiety although she knew her mother tried to speak lightly.

"But mother, suppose he does not come — for hours?" asked Sadie who was younger than Lydia by several years.

Mrs. Slade shook her head. "We must not 'suppose' any such thing, children,"

duroy road gained; they were on their way to town!"

Town! What would Lydia not have been willing to give to be living comfortably in town?

They tramped on — and on. Fred had taken the one pair of snowshoes along with his rough home-made sled. Lydia reflected that about everything they possessed was "home-made." Indeed their living was primitive. Perhaps it was no wonder that Lydia dreaded the cold north-country. Even the flour must be hauled miles, and of course they must run out of it before father returned! But Fred was no coward; he had said he must do his part.

"When I get a sack of flour on my sled — we'll not starve at any rate!" he had cried that morning. "Last summer Will and I had great sport going to the mill!"

Yes — last summer — how very different then! A truly beautiful land in summer! said Lydia to herself as she marched along that cold night. A far star winked at her through the leafless trees and she made a wry face as she winked back. She could be "game" too, she assured herself. It was worse for mother, having to go forth at night, with a gun for safety! How Lydia hoped that her father would return on the morrow! Perhaps he might even bring the good news that his town work was finished until spring! And if —

Again that awful baying from afar.

"Mother! How near are the wolves?" cried Lydia.

"A number of miles north of us, dear. They will hardly venture so far south. The weather has been quite mild until today, so they cannot be very ravenous," said Mrs. Slade, but her voice lacked conviction.

"They say the timber-wolves only come where there is a clearing and where folks live, when they are starved," went on Lydia, more to reassure herself than to make a statement.

"And very rarely have they traveled as far south as this," agreed her mother.

After some time they reached the nearest neighbor's cabin which belonged to a trapper who spent most of the winter further north, while his wife and young son kept their "farm" going in his absence.

Mrs. Slade knocked loudly at the low door, and presently a lad opened it cautiously, but upon recognizing the visitors opened it wide.

"Why, Mrs. Slade! What's wrong?" he asked quickly. Something *must* be, to have a caller at night!

"Have you seen Fred today?" inquired

Mrs. Slade as she and Lydia went within.

"Come in! Warm yourselves here!" cried a woman's voice from near the hearth where a roaring fire burned.

And glad indeed were they to avail themselves of the invitation. While the boy placed rude seats for them the trapper's wife, Mrs. Locke, continued:

"Yes, Fred passed here early this morning — he would not come in, but promised to stop on his way home. Has he not returned then?"

"No — and the wolves are near —" said Mrs. Slade, her voice full of anxiety.

"Mother — we must go on — now!" cried Lydia, who was a girl of action.

"Just a minute — the lad and I will go with you!" exclaimed Mrs. Locke. "Tom! Hitch the team to the low sled. That will hold all of us. Hurry!" And

a generous supper. The owner had urged him to remain for the night; he had heard the wolves to the northward. But Fred said he must go on — the family were expecting him.

Tom Loeke turned his team about; the flour, small sled and snowshoes were piled aboard, with Fred sitting between Mrs. Slade and Lydia, and home they started joyously. Almost seven miles to go — but what of that? Were they not reunited?

"Those wolves certainly sound nearer!" cried Tom from his seat in front. Evidently the lad had been listening intently.

And Lydia had almost forgotten the timber-wolves!

"Mother — hand me the gun!" said Fred. "Have you other shells?"

"Yes," replied Mrs. Slade as she gave him the weapon.

Quietly and as fast as possible they sped along. But indeed the dreaded baying sounded ever nearer. Evidently the travelers had been scented. Tom whipped up the team, but truly it needed no urging. Those horses well knew the danger!

Lydia had never raced through the night in such a mad manner. Probably she never would again.

As they neared the woods that ran past the Lockes' cabin there came a fearsome barking, sharp, treacherous — a dark object separated into smaller units, and the wolves were upon them.

"Fire!" cried Mrs. Slade. Fred was a good shot; his first effort evidently brought down one animal for the pack stopped short for a very few minutes.

The horses sped wildly on; they gained several rods. But then on came the wolves more madly than ever.

"The flour!" cried Mrs. Slade. "Throw it over, Lydia! We must!"

Lydia did as bid; there went their food —

"That has stopped them! They will wrangle over it for several minutes!" shouted Fred, as he re-loaded.

"Do not fire now; save the shells," warned Tom.

Breathlessly they raced ahead. Instead of turning into the Lockes' place Tom wisely kept on towards the Slade cabin. It was late — midnight indeed; and how were Sadie and Lily faring?

Again the maddened wolves were almost upon them. They had been cheated! Fred fired; they fell back once more.

"Home!" almost screamed Lydia suddenly. "I see the light from our candle in the window!" The girl hardly knew whether to laugh or cry. She felt like doing both — at once!

One last shot pierced the air as they



"Why, Mrs. Slade! What's wrong?"

the kind woman began to hunt out her heavy coat with other wraps.

Before many minutes they were in the open; the fresh horses started off briskly. Once in a while the distant but distinct baying of wolves could be heard. However they never seemed to sound any nearer.

After several miles of hard traveling they pulled up in front of a well-lighted cabin. As Mrs. Slade climbed from the sled with Lydia's help the door opened — and who should emerge but Fred!

What a relief! Involuntarily they all sighed and a heavy weight seemed to roll from Lydia's shoulders. So far, so good!

Fred was no less thankful to see his mother, sister and friends. He explained that there had been some delay in obtaining the flour — and he would not return home without it! Long after dark he had reached this cabin and had been given

urned into the Slade place. "A warning those beasts!" cried Fred. "It's worth the shell!"

Sadie's white face peered through the window, and behind her stood Lily on her toe. The folks were home!

Safely into the roughly made but tight barn were the horses led. Mrs. Locke and Tom had been persuaded to spend the night, for they had left everything secure at home.

"The fire will die out — but no great matter," said Mrs. Locke, "and I certainly would rather return by daylight!"

Presently they were all within the cheerful cabin, talking, explaining to Lydia, and preparing a pot of coffee.

"Your biscuits are 'most dried up!" laughed Sadie a little shakily, as she offered them to Fred.

"Could you see our candle far away — even through the trees?" asked Lily of Lydia.

"I could! It was the loveliest thing I ever saw!" cried Lydia.

And with the morning came Father and Brother Will. Such a glorious morning — with no sound nor sight of wolf. Just dazzling sunshine, the bluest of skies and the whitest of snows.

"However," said Mr. Slade after things had quieted down a bit, "next winter we will remain in town. And now my work there is finished until spring. The boys and I must do some trapping. And see! We brought several bags of flour. There will be plenty of food with the game we intend to fetch. What do you say, boys?"

They laughed and nodded while mother solemnly handed over the trusty old gun.

"Lydia, dear," said Mrs. Slade, "do bring my knitting-bag! The socks and mittens they will need!"

turns, books, friends, chickadees and sunsets in 1927!

"But," you say, "suppose I did some bad things and had some bad habits in 1926. What shall I do about them?"

This is what to do. Think over the bad things — the selfish, careless, rude acts — but forget the "wont's" in your New Year's resolutions and use "wills!" Change, "I won't tease the dog" to "I WILL be kind to Rover." Fix over all your resolutions about everything from movies to mayonnaise and put in "I will!" all along the line. If you do this you will put in your will all along the line!

The surest way to a happy New Year is by a look backward at the best and a look forward to the best!

The Deer Who Saved Men's Lives

BY ALICE A. KEEN

BESIDE a lake far up in the western mountains, six men were building a house. It was late in the autumn, almost time for snow to begin flying, and yet they stayed on because they wanted to finish their work.

Then, on the very last day before their return, the snow began to fall. It was a furious storm and they had no snowshoes or skis with which to make their way down the mountain side. They had only a little food left and they were very anxious. They knew that help could not reach them for a long time.

On the second night of the storm a herd of deer came into the camp for shelter. Deer are usually very shy and run away from human beings, but now they were more afraid of the blizzard than they were of men.

Very gently, so as not to frighten them into a stampede, the men surrounded the deer and drove them into one of the unfinished buildings.

The next morning the men made a drag and harnessed the wild deer to it, and they made rough skis to keep themselves from sinking into the snow. Then, hanging on to the drag which the deer pulled, they started for home down the mountain.

The deer behaved well, and let themselves be guided until they had broken a road through the forest and had come near enough to the town for the men to go on by themselves.

There they were halted and the men were so grateful to the deer that they gave them all the sugar that was left in their provisions. Then the men turned the animals loose, free to go back to their home in the forest while the workers went on down the mountain to their homes in the town.

Not one of those six men will ever shoot another deer for sport, for he will always remember how some of those wild creatures once saved his life.



By
WAITSTILL
HASTINGS
SHARP

Text: Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare. —Isaiah 43:9.

WE are so near to New Year's Day and the New Year's spirit is such a good thing to think about that we'd better call this New Year's Sunday and share a few thoughts this morning.

There is more *foreverness* about December 31st than any other day in the year. There is more *hopefulness* about January 1st than any other day in the year. And just about this time if we're feeling lonesome or sad or thoughtful we look back and feel the *foreverness*; and if we're feeling happy and strong we look forward and feel the *hopefulness*. What do you really think about when the new year is getting started in the first days of January? — when you come to realize that an old year with all its fun and failures, its songs and its sadness, has had four figures tacked onto it — 1926 — and has become 1926 forever?

Let's get a pencil before we go any farther and take a look *all around* and put down what we think of just at this season.

Well, now that we have taken some time out for thinking, let's see what "thinks" we have. We'll compare lists.

We all seem to agree on making a lot of New Year's resolutions like:

I won't tease the cat, or

I won't say, "I hate mayonnaise dressing," or

I won't grouch when I can't go to the movies.

We make New Year's *resolutions* because the past is the past and we can't change it now. So we look to the future and promise to be better. (You know it's easier to look to *tomorrow* and *promise* than it is to look back to *yesterday* and be *sorry*.) But even if it is January 2, 1927, today, I think that it is a mighty good thing to look back to 1926 and say to yourself:

"There was a lot more in good old 1926 than teasing the dog, and saying, 'I hate mayonnaise dressing,' and grouching when I couldn't go to the movies. There was a lot more than bad habits. There was a good deed now and then. I ought to give that another chance in 1927. There was a good book now and then — I ought to read another in 1927. There was a fine friend now and then — I ought to see him in 1927. There was a chickadee on the lilac in the front yard last January — I ought to tie up some more suet for him in 1927. There was a wonderful June sunrise — and there'll be thirty mornings in June, 1927. I guess there were so many fine things in 1926 that it would take me 365 days to remember them all. So what I'll do is to try to repeat in 1927 all the best that came my way in 1926!"

I mean that one of the things we ought to do on New Year's Sunday is to *look back for the best*. Isn't it fun! Then instead of writing out a lot of silly New Year's resolutions write out some plans to make the good things happen again, and more often. Plan for *more* good



THE BEACON CLUB

THE EDITOR'S POST BOX

CASTINE, ME.

Dear Editor: I am a member of the Beacon Club but I am sorry to say I have lost my pin. Will you please send me another? I am enclosing a two-cent stamp.

Castine is a very historic town. There are many forts here, and some very old houses, also. I live right beside Fort George. In the winter we go skiing there. Sometimes we go coasting. This fort is about twenty-five or thirty feet high. There is no covering or roof over it. The boys play baseball inside of it.

I have corresponded with three girls through *The Beacon*.

I go to the Unitarian church. The minister is Rev. J. H. Mueller. My Sunday-school teacher is Mrs. Clements.

Yours truly,
MARGARET HALL.

15 PRESCOTT ST.,
SANFORD, ME.

Dear Editor: I should like to become a member of the Beacon Club and wear its button. I am fourteen years of age and I go to the Unitarian Sunday School. I read many stories in *The Beacon* and enjoy them very much. I should like to have some one of my age write to me. My Sunday-school teacher's name is Miss Nellie Wilkinson.

Your loving friend,
MARTHA RIDDLE.

Other new members of our Club are, Mildred Moen, Underwood, Minn.; Alice E. Garrett, New Brighton, S. I.; Eda Jane Glossbrenner, Josephine Jackson, and William Titus, Indianapolis, Ind.; Vernon and Woodrow Turner, Dodson, Va.; Lillian Loraine Threadgill, Ansonville, N. C.; Catherine Snow, Bellows Falls, Vt.

New members in Massachusetts are, Robert Otis Apts and Elizabeth Lincoln, Cohasset; Jane Daniels, Hingham; Phyllis Howland and Shirley Robertson, Lexington; Evelyn Whitcomb Green, Littleton; Betty Ware, New Bedford; Percy L. Walker, Jr., Millbrook; Junior Herrick, So. Duxbury.

OUR PURPOSE: Helpfulness.

OUR MOTTO: Let your light shine.

OUR BADGE: The Beacon Club Button.

Dear Club Members: We are sending a package of foreign stamps to Charles Byron, of Erie, Pa., as he is the boy who first suggested that we have a column about stamps on this page and has now sent us a letter telling how he started his collection, in which you will all be interested.

We are also glad to publish the poem entitled "Winter," by Helen Wintersteen, of Uxbridge, Mass.

THE BEACON CLUB EDITOR.

226 WEST FIFTH ST.,
ERIE, PA.

Dear Editor: I am going to tell you how I started out stamp collecting. It was like this: I had never heard about stamp collecting until some boys who moved in across the street told me about it. They saved stamps and had an album. I bought some stamps from them, — some from Japan, and Greece, and a few others. That was how I started. My mother had a post-card album with foreign post-cards and foreign stamps on them. I took the stamps off and put them in my album. I still get stamps in packets from a bookstore here in Erie. I can also give the names of some stamp dealers if any one would like to have them.

Sincerely,
CHARLES BYRON.

Winter

By HELEN WINTERSTEEN (AGE 12)

Winter is a frosty time
When icicles around us climb.
The snow comes helter-skelter down
And blows around about the town.

Then comes Santa in his sleigh —
I know why he's blithe and gay —
He's going to the houses all,
Leaving things both large and small.

Santa comes but once a year
But he always brings good cheer;
To the needy and the sick
He's a jolly old Saint Nick.

PUZZLERS

Enigma

I am composed of 16 letters and am an author.

My 12, 5, 6, 7 is to peal.

My 16, 14, 3, 4 is the last name of a movie actress.

My 8, 14, 6 is a metal.

My 10, 2, 8, 5, 9, 10 is a synonym of race.

My 1, 11, 15, 16 is part of a bird.

My 13, 14, 7, 9, 12 is strength.

JEAN DOREMUS

Riddle

They're owned by elephants and trees;
They often go across the seas;
On other trips they're taken, too;
Without them what would travelers do?

VIRGINIA R. GRUNDY

Answers to Puzzles in No. 12

Enigma.—Be just, be good, and fear not.

Anagram Verse.—"If you would have the loves of Christmas live, Then with a Christmas heart Receive and give; If you would know The best the day can do, Keep, keep a Christmas heart The whole year through."

Transposition Puzzle.—Lemon.

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